

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest – 2007
Second Prize: Patricia Florez Perez, Lake Washington Girls Middle School

Dear Beloved Community,

I have just learned about you from reading Dr. Martin Luther King's writings. I am sad that you have not come into being yet, but I hope that one day you do. This is the year 2007, soon to be 2008, and right now you are nowhere in sight.

How I long to see you, my dear beloved community. From Dr. King's explanation of your beauty, I see how lovely you could be. The beloved community is a garden. The roses that decorate the beloved community are the ability to forgive. The beautiful green trees that stand so tall are the acceptance to all people. The soothing wind is the peace you provide. The gorgeous grass is the equality you offer. The smiles come from the agape love that you give to all.

Sadly, it has been over 40 years since Dr. King proclaimed your beauty, and we are nowhere closer to seeing you appear in our world. We have the UN, but the UN is not like the beloved community. The UN has five countries that have the power of veto, and these same five countries are also some of the richest in the world. This power to the rich is certainly not what Dr. King meant for his beloved community.

It seems that money is what is tearing us apart and slowly we are flowing away farther from you because of money. These riches bring new technology but not closer to you. We have Ipods and portable computers but this technology is not bringing us any closer to you; in fact it is making it even harder to find you.

The world right now is in chaos, with wars everywhere. In fact, the United States, one of the richest countries, is at war with Iraq, a much poorer country; one of the most powerful countries is at war with a developing country. I am afraid that you, beloved community, would be shocked to see that kind of strife in the world.

There is chaos in the United States, too. With racism everywhere in the United States, we still judge people by the color of their skin. Sadly, there are still people with fear of those who are different. Even with the work of Dr. King and his legacy, I fear that the year 2008 will not bring us any closer to reaching you, the beloved community.

Each year that passes people may lose hope that you will ever arrive. However, we must take action and start to believe that this dream can be a reality. If we can put a stop to wars, we may find that we are closer to making you a reality. When we can open ourselves to different cultures, rather than seeing the differences, we can see what we have in common. A simple act of tolerance may bring us nearer.

Finding the similarities between people will not bring unanimity because the beauty of the beloved community is that everyone is different but appreciates one another. The beloved community will be a community where everyone stands in common ground but on very different gardens.

Forgiveness is the key to bringing you, the beloved community. Presently, we are not able to forgive each other, which leads to war and prejudice. Learning to forgive will be the hardest step to conquer. If we forgive others, believe in you, and have faith in you, then I know that the beloved community could become reality.

Your Beauty, beloved community, will bring an end to violence.

You, beloved community, will be a place where we will have no need for war because we will be able to use words to solve conflicts. Sadly, wars keep us in a barbaric age, but we must now become civilized, as we have in other areas.

The beloved community is able to forgive and give in when conflict arises. Dr. King will not be alive to see you, and maybe I won't either, but we both hope and know that you are more than a utopia and that you can be reality. I will do everything a single person can do to bring your beautiful garden here on earth.

I will start with me because the change in one person can cause a tidal wave to reach the shore. A bigger wave is caused when a person chooses, like Dr. King, to make change happen. We can't see the shore yet but we know that it exists and that if we all cooperate we will reach the shining shore. Some people have lost hope that we can reach that shore and they are only pulling us further away from our goal. There are others, like me, who believe that out in the vast ocean there is a shore for the beloved community, and we are causing tidal waves that are bringing us closer.

One day, when we all believe, we will reach that shore and eat all of the fruits that are offered in the garden of the beloved community.

From, Hopeful-8th-Grader-in-Seattle

Bibliography

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